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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 002690

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ITALIAN VIEWS ON GAERC AGENDA: IRAQ TO DOMINATE DISCUSSIONS

REF: A) STATE 147536 B) ROME 02489.

CLASSIFIED BY: POLITICAL MINISTER-COUNSELOR TOM COUNTRYMAN. REASON:1.5  
(B)(D)

IRAQ

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11. (C) MFA DIRECTOR FOR EU CFSP LUIGI MATTIOLO PREDICTED THAT FMS WILL FOCUS ON IRAQ AT THE JULY 12-13 GAERC, POSSIBLY EATING INTO SOME OF THE TIME CURRENTLY ALLOCATED TO OTHER AGENDA ITEMS. HE NOTED THAT IRAQI PM ALLAWI "PLUS A HIGH LEVEL DELEGATION" FROM THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT WILL ATTEND A WORKING LUNCH DURING MONDAY'S SESSIONS. MATTIOLO CONFIRMED THAT AN "EU PRESENCE" IN IRAQ IS CURRENTLY UNDER DISCUSSION AMONG MEMBER STATES AND WILL BE PART OF THE GAERC AGENDA "IN THE CONTEXT OF AN EXAMINATION OF THE OVERALL SECURITY SITUATION IN IRAQ." FOR NOW, THE EU WILL MAKE USE OF EXISTING MEMBER STATE EMBASSIES, ESPECIALLY ITALY AND UK, AS A BASE FOR ANY EU INITIATIVES. HE PREDICTED FREQUENT VISITS TO BAGHDAD BY EU DELEGATIONS, AND THAT MEMBER STATES WOULD APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF AN "EU SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR IRAQ" BY SEPTEMBER. HE UNDERLINED THAT ALL THESE STEPS WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN IN CLOSE COOPERATION AND CONSULTATION WITH THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT, ALLAWI'S LUNCH WITH THE 25 FMS REPRESENTING THE FIRST STEP IN THIS PROCESS. MATTIOLO ALSO NOTED THAT THE EU HAS ALLOCATED 200 MILLION EUROS IN ASSISTANCE FUNDS (POLICE TRAINING, RULE OF LAW PROJECTS, ETC.) FOR IRAQ FOR 2005, AND WILL LIKELY APPROVE A SIMILAR AMOUNT FOR 2006 PENDING EVALUATION OF HOW CURRENT FUNDS ARE BEING ABSORBED. IRAQ DESK OFFICER LUIGI MACCOTTA ADDED THAT AN EU EXPERTS MEETING ON POLICE TRAINING ASSISTANCE WILL ALSO TAKE PLACE ON JULY 12 IN BRUSSELS.

BALKANS

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12. (C) MATTIOLO SAID THAT DISCUSSION ON THE BALKANS WOULD LIKELY BE LIMITED TO WELCOMING PRODUCTIVE CONTACT GROUP CONSULTATIONS IN NEW YORK ON THE SFOR-EU TRANSITION IN BOSNIA. MINISTERS MAY ALSO TOUCH ON FINANCING FOR THE FOLLOW-ON MISSION.

SUDAN

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13. (C) MINISTERS WILL AUTHORIZE AN EXAMINATION OF DATA ALREADY COLLECTED FROM VARIOUS BILATERAL VISITS TO THE REGION (INCLUDING MFA U/S BONIVER'S VISIT TO DARFUR). MATTIOLO PREDICTED THAT THE EU WOULD INCREASE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND DEPLOY A "HUMANITARIAN MISSION" TO SUDAN IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

AFGHANISTAN

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14. (C) MFA AFGHANISTAN DESK OFFICER PATRICK MURA SAID THAT EU MEMBER STATES STRONGLY SUPPORT AFGHANI EMPOWERMENT AND FULL PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTION PROCESS AND A LIMITED OBSERVER MISSION. HE SAID THAT IF THE SECURITY SITUATION WARRANTED, THE EU WOULD ACCEPT A DELAY OF 3 MONTHS FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND SIX MONTHS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION. OSCE OFFICE DIRECTOR FABIO CRISTIANI SAID THAT OSCE CONSENSUS IS BUILDING FOR A 50 PERSON MONITORING MISSION, PENDING AN EXAMINATION OF THE SECURITY SITUATION AND A FORMAL INVITATION FROM KABUL. ITALY ITSELF WOULD LIKELY SEND THREE OBSERVERS. THE OSCE SECRETARIAT IS SENDING A SMALL TEAM TO KABUL TO ADVANCE THE MISSION.

EU CHINA ARMS EMBARGO

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15. (C) MFA CHINA DESK OFFICER GIANLUCA GRANDI TOLD US THAT ITALY'S POSITION HAD NOT CHANGED FROM THAT REPORTED IN REF B.

BURMA

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16. (C) MARCO DELLA SETA, OFFICE DIRECTOR, SOUTH EAST ASIA AND GIUSEPPE CALVETTA, OFFICE DIRECTOR HUMAN RIGHTS TOLD US THAT BURMA WAS NOT ON THE GAERC AGENDA. THEY DID CONFIRM THAT BOTH ITALY AND THE EU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE LACK OF PROGRESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA AND THE CONTINUED DETENTION OF AUNG SAN SUU KII. AT THE LAST ASEM MEETING IN APRIL, THE EU EXPRESSED HOPE THAT BURMA WOULD SHOW PROGRESS ON HUMAN

RIGHTS, AND IS THEREFORE DISAPPOINTED THAT THE SITUATION HAS NOT IMPROVED. HOWEVER THE EU BELIEVES IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN A DIALOGUE WITH ALL ASIAN PARTNERS AND DOES NOT WANT THE BURMA ISSUE TO OVERSHADOW REGIONAL RELATIONS.

17. (C) DELLA SETA CONFIRMED THAT ITALY SUPPORTS CONTINUED BURMESE PARTICIPATION IN ASEM, AND THAT THE ASEM PARTNERS

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E ASIAN PARTNERS) WILL NOT ACCEPT THE 10 NEW EU MEMBERS INTO ASEM - HE USED THE TERM "BLACKMAIL."

LIBERTAD ACT TITLE III

18. (C) PAOLO MIRAGLIA DEL GIUDICE, OFFICE DIRECTOR FOR CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN STATED THAT AT THE LATAM WORKING GROUP MEETING IN BRUSSELS ON JULY 6, TITLE III WAS DISCUSSED AND ALL EU MEMBERS ARE NOW CLEAR ON THE PROCESS.

VENEZUELA ELECTIONS

19. (C) MFA SOUTH AMERICA OFFICE DIRECTOR DANIELE RAMPAZZO REPORTED THAT AN EU OBSERVER MISSION WAS READY TO DEPLOY, BUT WILL PROBABLY NOT PARTICIPATE DUE TO EXCESSIVE RESTRICTIONS BY THE VENEZUELAN NATIONAL ELECTORAL COUNCIL. HE STATED THAT ALTHOUGH THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT (PRES. CHAVEZ) HAS EXPRESSED POLITICAL WILLINGNESS TO HAVE A EU OBSERVER MISSION PRESENT, THE ELECTORAL COUNCIL IS PRESENTING TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES/RESTRICTIONS. RAMPAZZO IDENTIFIED RESTRICTIONS ON TIMING, FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT, ISSUANCE OF A DECLARATION AND GENERAL LOGISTICAL ISSUES AS TECHNICAL OBSTACLES WHICH WOULD NOT ALLOW THE EU OBSERVERS TO CARRY OUT THEIR ROLE SUCCESSFULLY. HE STATED THAT A FINAL DECISION WOULD BE MADE BY JULY 12 AND ADDED THAT UNLESS THE ELECTORAL COUNCIL BACKS OFF ON THESE RESTRICTIONS THE EU WILL NOT PARTICIPATE AND WILL ISSUE A STRONG STATEMENT. HE WAS UNSURE WHETHER THE EU WOULD PROVIDE FUNDING FOR AN OAS OBSERVER MISSION.

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